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**Personnel**

**VOTING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

**COMPLIANCE WITH THIS PUBLICATION IS MANDATORY**

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This instruction implements Air Force Policy Directive 36-31, *Personal Affairs*; Department of Defense (DoD) Directive 1000.4, *Federal Voting Assistance Program*, November 25, 1980; and the *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act of 1986* that applies to members of the uniformed services, Merchant Marine, and their spouses and dependents, and United States (US) citizens who are temporarily residing outside the territorial limits of the United States. It informs personnel about voting and the opportunities to exercise the right to vote, including opportunities for absentee voting. This instruction also applies to Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard Forces on activation, mobilization, or serving on active duty.

**SUMMARY OF REVISIONS**

This is the first publication of Air Force Instruction (AFI) 36-3107, superseding Air Force Regulation (AFR) 211-19. It adds information about the DoD Voting Information Center (VIC) and Ombudsman Service ( paragraph 2.2. and paragraph 2.3.)

**1. The Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD).** OSD administers the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP). OSD issues a Voting Action Plan used in general election years, and the Air Force writes and publishes a comparison Voting Plan.

**2. Where To Get Information on Elections:**

2.1. Refer to DoD and service publications such as Air Force Pamphlet (AFP) 211-4, *Voting Assistance Guide*, and Voting Fact Sheets for information on elections.

2.2. The DoD Voting Information Center provides information on elections and recorded messages from candidates, Governors, US Senators and US Representatives. Callers leave voice messages that

the FVAP forwards to their candidate or chief state election official for a direct response. The VIC answers questions concerning voting, elections, candidates or issues that cannot be answered locally. Refer to AFP 211-4 for current telephone numbers and calling instructions.

2.3. The FVAP Ombudsman Service (toll-free from most countries) investigates voting complaints and problems for Air Force members and their dependents. Get calling instructions from local embassies, consulates, international telephone operators in the United States or AFP 211-4.

2.4. Voters may subscribe to hometown newspapers or write to state and local political groups for information.

**3. Restrictions on Voting Activities.** It is against the law (Title 18, United States Code, Section 596 and Title 42, United States Code, Section 1973cc-25) for any commissioned, noncommissioned, warrant, or petty officer in the Armed Forces to:

3.1. Attempt to influence any member of the Armed Forces to vote or not to vote for a candidate.

3.2. Require any member of the Armed Forces to march to a polling place.

3.3. Poll any member of the Armed Forces on choice of or vote for any candidate. "Poll" means any request for information, verbal or written, which requires or implies the need for an answer with the intent of compiling the results obtained, either for personal use; to report to any other person, persons, political party, unincorporated association or corporation; or to publish the results orally, by electronic transmission, or in written or printed form. This does not preclude conducting surveys for statistical information necessary to measure participation in absentee voting by Air Force members and civilian employees of the Air Force.

3.4. Make public pronouncements on political matters, the treatment of which tends to prejudice discipline. (See AFI 51-902, *Political Activities by Members of the US Air Force* [formerly AFR 110-2].)

3.5. Use their official influence to interfere with an election or its outcome. Political speeches, activities at political conventions, or participating in political campaigns are prohibited. (See guidance in AFI 51-902.)

#### **4. Voting Assistance Responsibilities:**

4.1. HQ AFMPC/DPMASC requests the Inspector General to include the voting program as an item for specific review at every level of command, to ensure persons are informed and have an opportunity to exercise their right to vote, and the commander adequately provides voting officers or counselors. HQ AFMPC/DPMASC provides responses to problems that cannot be answered by installation voting officers (IVO) or their respective major commands.

4.2. The Director of Personnel at each major command (MAJCOM) monitors, evaluates, and ensures the success of the FVAP for the MAJCOM commander.

4.3. Installation commanders appoint an officer from base-wide resources to act as IVO and set-up an installation voting committee to develop and administer the local voting program by:

4.3.1. Ensuring unit commanders appoint one unit voting counselor (UVC) per every 20 unit members.

4.3.2. Ensuring the integrity and secrecy of the ballots cast and prevent fraud and coercion.

4.3.3. Having the Base Staff Judge Advocate provide answers to legal questions regarding the right to vote.

4.4. IVOs will:

4.4.1. Establish a voting assistance program according to the Air Force Voting Plan (issued for general election years) and AFP 211-4.

4.4.2. Ensure UVCs are trained to assist military and civilian personnel and their dependents.

4.4.3. Ensure all Armed Forces personnel receive at least one briefing, training period or information period of instruction devoted to absentee registration and voting during federal election years. Use internal information media to emphasize the availability of voting information, supporting materials, personal assistance and the importance of why every vote counts.

4.4.4. Provide their name and office telephone numbers to the information (directory assistance) telephone operator at their installation.

4.4.5. Ensure mail handlers process voting materials quickly.

4.5. UVCs will:

4.5.1. Make in-hand delivery of Standard Form (SF) 76, **Federal Post Card Registration and Absentee Ballot Request**, to Air Force personnel of voting age. Make SFs 76 available to all eligible individuals including dependents for use in general, primary, and special elections. Issue the SFs 76 outside the United States no later than 15 August before the election and within the United States no later than 15 September before the election. Refer to AFP 211-4 for instructions on the SF 76.

4.5.2. Provide SF 186, **Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot**, to overseas voters as the FVAP directs for Continental United States (CONUS) voters.

4.5.3. Provide individuals with absentee voting information for their home states, including (but not limited to) election dates, officials to be elected, constitutional amendments and other ballot proposals, absentee registration and voting rules. Election officials within a state determine eligibility requirements. State guidelines are in AFP 211-4.

4.5.4. File an after-action report in the form specified by the Director, FVAP. RCS: DD-DA&M (AR) 1918 applies. (See AFP 211-4.)

4.5.5. Conduct a Post Election Survey in the manner specified by the Director, FVAP. RCS: DD-DA&M (AR) 1918 applies. (See AFP 211-4.) Do not poll members on their choice of or their vote for a specific candidate. Focus on participation in the absentee registration and balloting process.

4.5.6. Order all forms from the Publishing Distribution Office (PDO).

4.5.7. Assist individuals who need help reading or understanding English language material. Provide assistance in the individual's appropriate language.

4.6. Military Personnel Flight (MPF) Customer Support Section will:

4.6.1. Provide assistance to the installation and unit voting assistance officers.

4.6.2. Comply with the Air Force Voting Plan.

**5. Voting by Absentee Ballot.** Voters will:

5.1. Use the SF 76 to register, and to request a ballot if the state so authorizes. Type or print each entry on the SF 76.

5.2. Complete the ballot, when received, according to the instructions received with the ballot. A commissioned officer or other official authorized by state law on absentee voting attests to the voter's oath (see AFI 51-504, Legal Assistance and Preventive Law [formerly AFR 110-22] and AFP 211-4 on requirements for each state and territory).

5.3. If the state balloting material is stuck in the envelope, open it in the way that least tears it. After voting, seal or tape the envelope as carefully and cleanly as possible. On the back of any return envelope that shows forced opening, write the following statement: "Envelope flap stuck when received, required forced opening before voting." The voter then must sign the statement and have the individual who gave the voter's oath sign it as well. Of course, if the state includes instructions for stuck ballots, comply with them.

5.4. Mail the completed ballot (and oath, if on separate paper) in the return envelope provided with the ballot to the address on the envelope or named in the instruction.

**6. Forms Prescribed.** SF 76, **Federal Post Card Registration and Absentee Ballot Request**, and SF 186, **Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot**.

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DCS/Personnel